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interest at least must be paid. This is already an enormous charge on the industry of the country. As this evil is common in nearly the same extent to most of the other European nations, the effect is so far neutralised. But in addition to this, the political importance of the country must be maintained ; a little island must continue to be the arbiter of the world. Extensive fleets and armies must be kept up, expensive civil and military establishments must be supported in a thousand colonies all over the globe, which return no profit to the nation. The balance of power must be regulated in Europe at the cost of long, frequent, bloody and ruinous wars. Could not the safety of the inhabitants of the British isles from foreign invasion and their happiness as far as it depends on civil institutions be secured at a cheaper rate ? Of this their wise men must judge. If not, their danger results from their unfortunate situation, from the great disproportion between their necessary expenses, and the number of people that bear the burthen of them.

Meanwhile my countrymen in the west are prosecuting their march in the career of national existence, blessed with liberty in its purest form, unincumbered with debt, an unlimited territory at command, and with all the enterprise of character and extent of information necessary to enable them to improve these advantages to the greatest possible degree. May they long continue to seek no other glory than that of being the happiest and consequently the wisest of nations. Safe from foreign violence behind the mighty wall of waters, which the blessing of providence has interposed for their defence between them and Europe, may they abjure forever the fatal passion of being feared and hated through the world. May their political efforts be solely intended to secure their own rights and to establish the custom of peace.

Tu, regere imperio populos, Romane, memento :
Hae tibi erunt artes, PACISQUE IMPONERE MOREM.

June 1820.



ART. XX.—*Le Trône Enchanté, Conte Indien traduit du Persan, par M. le Baron Lescallier.* New York, 1817.

A POEM previously unknown in Europe or America, translated from the Persian and published in one of our own cities, is a phenomenon, we presume, without a parallel among us. It

is principally this, which has led us to notice the work before us. The merit, which our country can claim for its appearance, stops with the simple fact of its having been printed at New York. Baron Lescallier was the late consul general of the French government, in that city. It appears from the preface to the work, that he had passed some years in India in the service of his government. Having pursued the study of the Persian language while in the East on account of its usefulness to him in the functions of his office, he continued the study, on his return to Paris, for the sake of examining the oriental manuscripts in the king's library. Among others, this story attracted his attention, as interesting to the European reader, in his opinion; and he informs us in a preface of very bad English, that he employed himself many years in translating it. The work, as we have it in French, was published by subscription, in numbers at New York, and an edition in English was projected at the same time, which failed.

We certainly agree with the baron, that it is interesting in one sense to read the translation of a book of this kind. It is *not* interesting or attractive as a skilfully wrought fiction, as containing exalted sentiments, or fine language. But as undoubtedly authentic, it shares the importance of any other genuine acquisition from remote ages or distant countries. A coin from Marathon or an armlet from Pompeii has an interest to us far beyond its intrinsic value; and a set of tales like these, descriptive of the manners of a perfectly distinct portion of mankind, is read with a curiosity far beyond the measure of its literary execution. We do not therefore think the course adopted by M. Lescallier very judicious. 'He has,' it seems, 'suppressed needless and unmeaning passages, and in some cases corrected, reformed and improved the text.' This would have been very well, had the whole been intended to be adapted to western taste in the manner of the Arabian tales. But as it was not the object of the translator to remodel the story, but to present a specimen of oriental manners, any alterations of the kind alluded to render our reliance on its delineations of Eastern manners less confident. Exactly in so far as this has been done, and it is not easy from the internal evidence to tell how far, the value of the whole is diminished. It is like smoothing from a cast of an antique the seams of the mould, which

prove it not to have been tampered with ; it may look neater, but has lost part of its value. There still, however, remains enough of orientalism, in the *Enchanted Throne*, to render it very tedious to any one accustomed to the connexion and unity of our works of fiction. It is moreover this inherent dullness in most of the oriental works of imagination, with which we have any acquaintance, which seems to us one of the true grounds why the languages in which they are written are not more studied by men of letters.

It has always appeared to us that most of the reasons given by Sir William Jones, for the neglect of the study of Asiatic literature, are quite too general, and such as would apply equally well to every other valuable pursuit, excepting of course the reason derived from the difference of religion between the great families of the East and West.

‘ Some men,’ says he, ‘ never heard of the Asiatic writings, and others will not be convinced there is any thing valuable in them ; some pretend to be busy and others are really idle ; some detest the Persians, because they believe in Mahomed, and others despise their language, because they do not understand it. We all love to excuse or conceal our ignorance, and are seldom willing to allow any excellence beyond our own attainments,’ &c.

It is to be feared that the *pride, content, and indolence* produced by ignorance, which Sir William assigns as the causes of the neglect of these languages, do not confine themselves to preventing the study of the literature of the East. Nor is it a very good reason for this neglect, that some men ‘ never heard of the Asiatic writings,’ more than it would be philosophical to account for the inferiority of the Roman navies to ours, by saying that we build larger ships and organize a better marine.

Not however to go into this dispute, we do not know that the curiosity of our countrymen will be much excited to the study of Persian, by the specimen we are about to set before them, or that they will think the vast labour, which M. Lescallier declares he has employed upon it for many years, very well bestowed. ‘ On y trouve,’ says the baron, ‘ les maximes de la morale la plus parfaite, applicables surtout à la conduite des souverains envers leurs sujets.’ Whatever may be the morality of oriental or European princes, it is to be doubted if our American presidents will profit greatly by the example

of a prince, who employs himself so frequently at a distance from his cabinet and capital, in achieving the love adventures of his less intrepid subjects, by leaping into caldrons of heated oil and lakes of burning water. pp. 52, 105. Mr. Maturin, in his last romance, has adopted one method of introducing the stories which are contained in his collection, which has at least the merit of originality ; that of assembling a physician's cabinet of skeletons around a table, to have their histories related. The Persian novelist is less singular. It appears from him that in the *olden* time, which the translator fixes at our era, there flourished a prince of such wonderful virtue that it was determined in the councils of the genii to reward his great qualities. The prize fixed on, something on the principle of Pope's 'apples and cakes,' was, it seems, a magnificent throne. This was accordingly manufactured, presented, and occupied. When the Rajah, however, whose virtues were thus immortalized, died, his successors, being unworthy of the divine gift, the throne was, by the order of the great genius Ainder, safely buried, till a prince worthy of the illustrious Bekermadjiet should appear. Under ground therefore the throne remained for a series of centuries, and might in process of time have served for a new theory to some wondering geognost, when fortunately for all parties a Rajah of great promise appears and the throne is discovered. He is not however allowed to sit upon it, till the thirty-two guardian genii have related to him an anecdote of its former possessor. These, with some fragments of different subjects form the book, which the baron has translated. We have extracted the following, as having as much *mannerism* as most of these stories. It seems it was the object of the Rajah to cause a princess, who kept obstinate silence, to speak four times. An attendant genius conceals himself in a lamp :

‘Békermadjiet converse avec la lampe de la reine, et lui raconte une histoire, à laquelle la lampe fait une observation, et une réponse qui fait rompre pour la première fois le silence à la reine.

‘Le Rajah Békermadjiet se tourna d’abord du côté de la lampe, et lui adressa la parole en ces termes : oh, lampe ! Il y a bien des jours que je suis arrivé dans cette ville, venant de très loin ; je n’y ai fait aucune connaissance, je n’ai formé de liaison avec qui que ce soit, à qui je puisse confier mes peines, ou mes espérances. Votre Reine ne fait aucune attention à moi, et ne daigne pas me parler.

‘ Vous étiez parfaitement heureux, lui répondit la lampe, vos jours se passoient dans la plus agréable satisfaction. Qu’êtes vous venu faire parmi nous ? Quel motif a pu vous engager à quitter votre capitale d’Aotchine, et votre royaume pour venir dans cette ville, où commande une Reine du plus méchant caractère ? Aucun Prince ne peut vous être comparé pour la bravoure, et la générosité : et jamais dans le monde on ne verra naître votre pareil. Vous êtes ici malheureux et délaissé ; n’avez vous pas chez vous un nombre de femmes au moins aussi belles que cette reine, et bien plus aimables ? Que pouviez vous espérer de trouver ici, que vous n’eussiez pu vous procurer chez vous tout aussi bien, et même avec avantage ?

‘ Békermadjiet feignit un grand étonnement, en entendant ces paroles, et demanda d’où elle provenoient. La même voix lui répondit ; j’étois de la vase dans le fond d’un étang ; un ouvrier ayant creusé un puit, et après m’avoit bien lavée et pâtrie dans l’eau, me battit à coups de maillet, si fortement, que mes os furent brisés et réduits en pâte. En cet état il me façonna, me passa au tour, et me polit ; enfin il me réduisit à n’avoir plus aucune force, ni même le sentiment de mon existence, en me faisant cuire dans un four. Alors le scélérat me perça les yeux, et fit de moi une lampe, en garnissant mes yeux de mèches et remplissant mon corps d’huile, dans l’état où vous me voyez, servant de luminaire dans cet appartement. Je n’ai pas la faculté de tenir une plus longue conversation avec vous : je ne puis que vous entendre, si vous daignez avoir pour moi quelque complaisance : si vous avez quelque pitié pour ma triste situation, racontez moi une histoire agréable et amusante : j’aurai beaucoup de plaisir à vous écouter, et cela me fera passer avec satisfaction une partie cette nuit.

‘ Ecoutez, oh lampe ! dit le Rajah Békermadjiet. On rapporte que dans la ville de Caboul, il y avoit jadis un marchand, qui, avec d’immenses richesses, possédoit une très belle fille, dont les charmes et la beauté étoient supérieurs à toutes les autres, et au dessus de toute description : elle ravissoit tous les cœurs, et la renommée de son rare mérite s’étoit tellement répandue dans tout le païs, que les hommes les plus puissans et les plus considérables ambitionnoient de l’obtenir pour épouse. Son père avoit déclaré qui il ne l’accorderoit qu’à celui des prétendants qui auroit une profession utile, dans laquelle il feroit preuve de la perfection et de la supériorité les plus décidées.

‘ Il y avoit dans cette ville trois jeunes gens bien élevés, doués de talens et d’instruction, adroits, aimables et pleins d’esprit, et d’adresse. Ils se mirent sur les rangs, et firent savoir leur intention par un messager au père de la Demoiselle, en lui annonçant quels étoient leurs professions, et leurs talens respectifs. L’un

d'eux annonça que son état étoit celui d'orateur, et qu'à l'éloquence et au talent de la parole, il joignit l'art de deviner, au point que tout ce qui arrivoit dans le monde de bien ou de mal, lui étoit à l'instant dévoilé. Le second se donna pour avoir l'industrie de fabriquer un cheval de bois, avec une vertu magique et talismanique, telle que celui qui le monteroit, pourroit parcourir en un seul jour une étendue de chemin, que l'on ne pourroit faire en moins d'un mois par les moyens ordinaires de voyager : et de plus qu'il pourroit revenir chez lui dans le même jour. Le troisième se présenta comme un excellent arquebusier et tireur de flèches : il prétendit que son adresse étoit telle, que jamais il ne manquoit son coup, et que toujours la flèche qu'il lançoit atteignoit le but.

‘ Le marchand fit part à sa fille des propositions, et des différens talens des trois jeunes gens qui prétendoient à sa main : elle demanda jusqu'au lendemain pour faire connoître sa réponse.

‘ Dans la nuit suivante, sans que l'on sut comment, la Demoiselle disparut de la maison paternelle. La nouvelle se répandit le lendemain matin dans la ville, et y causa une grande sensation. Malgré toutes les recherches, on ne put savoir ce que la fille du marchand étoit devenue. Le père désolé de ce coup imprévu, fut d'abord trouver celui des trois prétendants qui avoit l'art de deviner : il lui dit : ma fille a disparu de chez moi cette nuit : puisque tous les évènemens vous sont connus, apprenez moi ce qu'elle est devenue.

‘ Le jeune homme, après avoir réfléchi quelques instans, répondit au père : un magicien a enlevé votre fille ; il la tient enfermée dans un château fort, placé sur le sommet d'une montagne inaccessible à tout mortel. Il lui indiqua en même tems de quel côté et à quelle distance étoit située cette montagne.

‘ Muni de cette information, le marchand se rendit chez le second jeune homme, et lui dit : voici le moment de fabriquer votre cheval talismanique ; nous y ferons monter le tireur de flèches, afin qu'il se rende au château fort qui recèle ma fille, sur une montagne escarpée dont je lui indiquerai la direction, où étant parvenu, il tuera le magicien ravisseur de ma fille, et me la ramènera.

‘ Le jeune homme se mit tout de suite à l'ouvrage, et fabriqua le cheval merveilleux ; le tireur de flèches le monta, et arriva au château fort, tua le magicien, et ramena la fille du marchand.

‘ Il s'éleva ensuite une violente discussion entre les trois prétendants, chacun d'eux réclamant la possession de la Demoiselle. C'est moi qui dois l'obtenir, dit le premier, parce que j'ai fait connoître en quel endroit elle étoit retenue et cachée, et que sans moi on n'auroit pu la revoir. Le fabricateur du cheval talismanique soutint que son droit étoit préférable à celui des deux autres,

parceque, sans le cheval qu'il avoit fabriqué et fourni, on n'aurroit jamais pu ramener la Demoiselle. Le tireur de fléches, enfin, dit aux autres : Vos prétentions sont mal fondées ; c'est à moi qu'appartient le droit d'épouser la Demoiselle. N'est-ce pas moi qui ai tué le magicien qui la retenoit, et n'est-ce pas moi qui l'ai reconduite à son père.

‘A cet endroit de sa narration, le Rajah Békermadjiet demanda à la lampe : à qui penses-tu que la Demoiselle doive être ajugée ? La lampe, pour contrarier la Reine, dont l'humeur étoit connue, dit : la Demoiselle doit être donnée en mariage à celui qui a indiqué le lieu de sa retraite.

‘La Reine, à ces paroles, se mit en colère, et s'écria : scélérat, vagabond ! Lorsque tu te permets de mentir aussi impudemment, et de donner une aussi sotte décision en ma présence, comment puis-je le souffrir ? Ignorant que tu es, n'est il pas évident qu'aucun des prétendants n'a mérité la main de la Demoiselle, autant que le tireur de fléches, qui, pour la ramener, a payé de sa personne, et exposé sa vie ?

‘Le Rajah Békermadjiet, bien satisfait de cette sortie de la Reine, se contenta de dire : la reine a parlé une fois : lampe, je réclamerai votre témoignage.’ pp. 188—194.

There are some useful notes interspersed. Among them the following mention of the Parias, which seems sufficiently probable, but which we should hardly forgive, if it should weaken our interest in St. Pierre's lovely ‘cottage.’

‘But it is a mistake to suppose that the Choutras, Soudras, or Parias, the inferior cast are as vile and contemptible as most Europeans are accustomed to suppose, led by the description of many writers, as the abbé Raynal. The Parias form the great number of the mass of the people. They exercise the mechanical arts, which are useful and necessary to society, though not ennobling. Many Parias are rich, having acquired wealth by commerce. A Brauni told me of a Paria who had written a very valuable treatise of morals, whose name I happen to have forgotten.’ p. 62.

ART. XX.—*Essai sur l'Indifférence en matière de Religion ;*
par M. L'Abbé F. de la Mennais. Tome Premier, pp. 562.
 Quatrième édition. Paris, 1818.

NOTHING has been published in France upon the subject of religion, since it was decreed, that God might exist, and the soul be immortal, which has attracted so much attention